

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A process for preparing at least one polyisocyanate polyisocyanates by comprising reacting organic amines with phosgene in an inert solvent, wherein the reaction is carried out in at least three stages, with the first stage being carried out in a mixing apparatus, the second stage in at least one residence apparatus and the third stage in ~~one or more~~ at least one ~~(reaction) columns~~ reaction column and the pressure in each successive stage being lower than that in the previous stage.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): A ~~The process as claimed in~~ of claim 1, wherein the at least one polyisocyanate is diphenylmethane diisocyanate (MDI), polyphenylene-polymethylene polyisocyanate (PMDI) ~~or a mixture of these two~~, tolylene diisocyanate (TDI), hexamethylene diisocyanate (HDI), ~~or~~ isophorone diisocyanate (IPDI), or a mixture of diphenylmethane diisocyanate (MDI) and polyphenylene-polymethylene polyisocyanate (PMDI).

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): A ~~The process as claimed in~~ of claim 1, wherein a nozzle is used as the mixing apparatus for the first stage.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): A ~~The process as claimed in~~ of claim 1, wherein a tube reactor, a stirred vessel, an unstirred residence apparatus or a phase separation apparatus for gas and liquid phases is used as the at least one residence apparatus for the second stage.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): A ~~The process as claimed in any of claims 1-4 of claim~~  
1, wherein the residence time in the residence apparatus of the second stage is from 1 second  
to 30 minutes, ~~preferably from 30 seconds to 10 minutes, particularly preferably from 2 to~~  
~~7 minutes.~~

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A ~~The process of claim 1 as claimed in any of claims 1-~~  
~~5~~, wherein the at least one residence apparatus of the second stage comprises residence  
reactor of the second stage is configured as at least two or more reactors of the same or  
different types which are connected in parallel, ~~or in series, or in a combination thereof.~~

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): A ~~The process as claimed in of claim 1~~, wherein the  
phosgene is separated off in the at least one reaction column ~~in the apparatus~~ of the third  
stage, ~~preferably a (reaction) column.~~

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): A ~~The process as claimed in of claim 1~~, wherein the  
pressure is reduced from the pressure of the ~~reactor~~ mixing apparatus of the first stage to the  
pressure of the ~~reactor~~ residence apparatus of the second stage by ~~means of a regulating valve~~  
~~or some other device characterized by a pressure drop.~~

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): A ~~The process as claimed in of claim 1~~, wherein the  
pressure is reduced from the pressure of the ~~reactor~~ at least one residence apparatus of the  
second stage to the pressure of the ~~reactor~~ at least one reaction column of the third stage by  
~~means of a regulating valve or some other device characterized by a pressure drop.~~

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): A ~~The process as claimed in~~ of claim 1, wherein the ~~reactor~~ mixing apparatus of the first stage is integrated into the ~~reactor~~ at least one residence apparatus of the second stage.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): A ~~The process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 10 of~~ claim 1, wherein the pressure upstream of the ~~static mixer~~ mixing apparatus is 3-70 bar, preferably 15-45 bar, ~~the pressure in the reactor of the second stage is 2.5-35 bar, preferably~~ 15-35 bar, ~~and the pressure in the reactor of the third stage is 2-20 bar, preferably 3.5-16 bar.~~

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): A ~~The process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 11 of~~ claim 1, wherein the temperature in the first, second and third stages is in each case ~~80-190 °C~~ 80-190 °C, preferably 90-150 °C.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): A ~~The process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 12 of~~ claim 1, wherein an aromatic hydrocarbon, ~~such as toluene or preferably a chlorinated~~ aromatic hydrocarbon, ~~such as chlorobenzene, ortho-dichlorobenzene or trichlorobenzene or~~ a mixture thereof is used as the inert solvent.

Claim 14 (New): The process of claim 1, wherein the residence time in the at least one residence apparatus of the second stage is from 30 seconds to 10 minutes.

Claim 15 (New): The process of claim 1, wherein the residence time in the at least one residence residence apparatus of the second stage is from 2 to 7 minutes.

Claim 16 (New): The process of claim 8, wherein the regulating device is a regulating valve.

Claim 17 (New): The process of claim 9, wherein the regulating device is a regulating valve.

Claim 18 (New): The process of claim 1, wherein the pressure upstream of the mixing apparatus is 15-45 bar.

Claim 19 (New): The process of claim 1, wherein the pressure in the reactor of the second stage is 2.5-35 bar.

Claim 20 (New): The process of claim 1, wherein the temperature in the first, second and third stages is in each case 90-150 °C.